

"BBN Job #41540"
Howard Frank
Tape Number Two
-- CARIBINER GROUP

QUESTION

HOWARD FRANK

Twenty-five years from now, as opposed to twenty-five years ago to(?) now, uh, I don't have the foggiest notion of where the world will be. I could give you a very good answer five years from now. I could give you a very good answer ten years from now. But these things tend to build on one another. And where we are now, is that we have taken the technology from the point of being an experimental and exploratory one(?) to a point where it works and is now beginning to infiltrate the world. Twenty-five years from now, the ... the sociological changes built upon this technology will have been so great that it's impossible to predict where we are

(sic). Because what we've built is more than just a technology that moves(?) bits(?). We've built a technology which enables a different way of ... of interacting with computers. And not only interacting with computers, but interacting with human beings. And so what happens is now we, uh ... in twenty-five years, we will have had enough to time to change society. Not just to change the technology of society. So we ... we started with technology. We're now moving through infrastructure and we're installing and infrastructure which is going to be pervasive throughout society. But, uh ... but two and a half decades from now, society will be different because of it. And so that I don't think anybody in the world can ... can say exactly how it's going to be. Which is the wonderful thing. Because we hope to be around still.

QUESTION

HOWARD FRANK

The ... the neat things that will come out of the technology will the fact that ... you're no longer restricted by distance. That what you could is you could sit in your home or your office and be anyway. You know, electronically anywhere. And that, uh, the art of the world ... the literature of the world ... the ... the entertainments of the world ... and the people of the world will be accessible to you, instantaneously. Virtually anywhere you are. And not only that, uh ... there ... there will be the world that's connected not just in your home, but also in your business, and also when you walk around. Because that little cellular telephone will have evolved to a full-fledged information device in ... in the next decade and a half. Or two decades as well.

QUESTION

HOWARD FRANK

The ...

QUESTION

HOWARD FRANK

The question, uh ... has arised (sic) ... you know, arisen many times of whether or not the ... you know, the fact that computers will liberate from having to be someplace will actually change the way we ... we actually physically move. And the answer is it will change it. But ... human beings are social animals. And even though we will virtually be there, it won't be the same thing as being there. I ... I said there will still be a need for the conventional kind of structure. But on the other hand, uh, there may not be a need ... you know, so ... there's ... what happens is that if you walk down to the hall ... you walk down a hall at ARFA, you run into people that you never expected to run into. And ... and you learn things that you never expected to learn. And those things are irreplaceable. And those things will not come

out of the electronic community.

QUESTION

HOWARD FRANK

Mm-hm.

QUESTION

HOWARD FRANK

I think that ... I think the child's notion is, uh, probably the right one. Okay. Because you see the thing is we're also a ... a product of our environment. And in the same way that social discourse and human ... human discourse for us is an essential element of ... of ... of being there, so to speak ... uh, if you bring somebody up in a different environment ... which is really different ... then the way they develop will be very, very different. And so I think that ... you know, if you really think about twenty-five years from now ... it will be ... the ... the children now will determine the true potential of what we've created. And maybe their children will even be

very different than that.

QUESTION

HOWARD FRANK

Well, the ... the one thing you didn't ask, okay?
Which is, uh ... a little coincidental. Which is,
you know, here we are talking about the
ARFINET. And here we're talking about twenty-
five years from now. But we're in a building
which is ARFA. Okay? And so ... how did that
happen? (Laughs) Why am I here?

QUESTION

HOWARD FRANK

Why am I here? Because a year and a half ago,
ARFA approached me and said how would you
like to be one of the key players in making the
information infrastructure for the nation happen?
And I said, "That's sounds like too good an offer
to turn down." And so ... uh ... for the last year
and a little bit, I've been working on ... uh,
interoperability(?). And ... and bringing the ...

the world of video together with the world of computers. And, uh ... and moving technology from, uh ... from the laboratory in the R&D stage into the ... the real world of operations. And actually having an absolute ball.

QUESTION

HOWARD FRANK

Sure.

QUESTION

HOWARD FRANK

HFRANK.

QUESTION

HOWARD FRANK

(Laughs)

QUESTION

HOWARD FRANK

HFRANK at ARFA DITEL(?).

QUESTION

HOWARD FRANK

That's ... I ... you know, I've ... it's hard

enough to get people to room one name, let
alone two.

QUESTION

(OFF MIKE)

(END OF TAPE TWO)